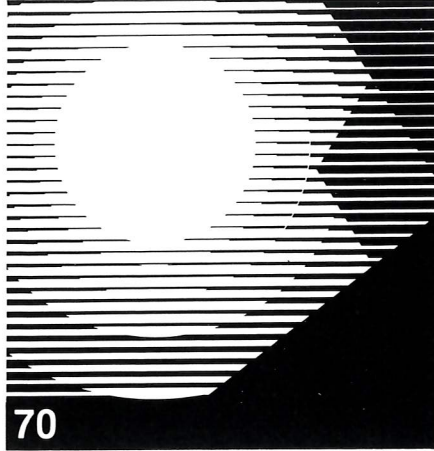
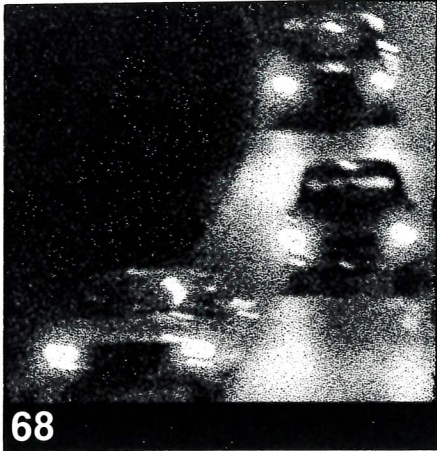


February 15, 1988

the
Northwestern
Lutheran



Missionaries on furlough



May the Lord our God be with us
as he was with our fathers;
may he never leave
or forsake us. 1 Kings 8:57

the Northwestern Lutheran

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

FEBRUARY 15, 1988/VOL. 75, NO. 4

Editorial office

Rev. James P. Schaefer, Editor
The Northwestern Lutheran
2929 N. Mayfair Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222-4398
Phone 414/771-9357

Beverly Brushaber, Assistant Editor

Contributing editors

J. G. Anderson, R. D. Balge, T. B. Franzmann, I. G. Frey, J. C. Gerlach, R. H. Hochmuth, P. E. Kelm, R. E. Lauersdorf, V. H. Prange, C. Toppe.

District reporters

K. Pasch (Arizona), B. Ragner (California), G. Lemke (Dakota-Montana), E. Schaeewe (Michigan), R. Edwards (Minnesota), T. Bauer (Nebraska), D. Kehl (North Atlantic), J. Eggert (Northern Wisconsin), J. Oldfield (Pacific Northwest), D. Nottling (South Atlantic), C. Learman (South Central), J. Huebner (Southeastern Wisconsin), D. Kipfmiller (Western Wisconsin).

Production

Production services of Northwestern Publishing House: Production coordinator, Clifford Koeller; Design and page make-up, Matthew Schaser, Duane Weaver; Subscription manager, Judy Olson.

Subscriber service

For subscription service, write: Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975. Phone 414/475-6600. Allow **four weeks** for a new subscription, subscription renewal or change of address.

Subscription rates (payable in advance)
U.S.A. and Canada — **One year, \$7.00; two years, \$13.00; three years, \$18.00.** Twenty-five or more unaddressed copies sent in a bundle to one address at \$4.00 per subscription. Every home mailing plan at \$4.50 per subscription. All prices include postage.

All other countries — Please write for rates.

The Northwestern Lutheran is available on **cassette** for the visually handicapped. For information, write: Workshop for the Visually Handicapped, 559 Humboldt Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55107.

THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN (ISSN 0029-3512) is published *semimonthly, except monthly in July, August and December*, by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Second class postage paid at Milwaukee, Wisconsin and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *The Northwestern Lutheran*, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975. ©1988 by *The Northwestern Lutheran*, magazine of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

FEATURES

- The word for today** by Robert H. Hochmuth 63
Saving grace — and then some
- Paul's letters from prison** by Julian G. Anderson 65
Colossians 1:24—2:19
- Gambling in America today** by Thomas B. Franzmann 66
The compulsive gambler
- Missionaries on furlough** by Ernst H. Wendland 68
Strangers at home
- The New Age movement** by Joel C. Gerlach 70
It can't be ignored

COLUMNS

- Editorial comment** by Carleton Toppe 64
Tragic folly
- From this corner** by the editor 79
- I would like to know** by Paul E. Kelm 80

NEWS

- Around the world** 74
- Farm Crisis Seminar video available** 75
- Top stories of 1987** 75
- Anniversaries celebrated** 76
- Eight graduated from DMLC** 76
- Michigan District** 76

Saving grace — and then some

by Robert H. Hochmuth

The fullness of his grace (John 1:16).

We have a new life with Christ — by grace. For one thing that means we cannot take it for granted. None of us was born a Lutheran; by birth we belonged to the cult of Adam and Eve, desiring independence from God. Spiritually we were no better than cold, stiff, stinking corpses who could never be fit for the family of the Holy One. What's more, we would never have come to life if it had been up to us.

The eternal God would have been fair if he had consigned us all to unending alliance with Satan and his doomed cohorts. But our Savior-God could not bear to see us lost; in his amazing love he determined to restore our undeserving race.

Saving grace

Detecting no merit in us, he gave his one and only Son to carry out what was required to change our repulsive condition. Serving and obeying perfectly as our brother Jesus substituted for us. Then willingly dying the death our rebelliousness deserved, he gained pardon for the world. He paid in full. The undeserving can go to heaven on a pass. That's saving grace.

Generic grace

That grace is for all. It has reconciled the entire fallen world to a just God. It confers the identical verdict on any penitent who is led to trust in Christ's merits. Its offer of new life is universal, imparting a new heart and a new will to any believing child of Adam.

This does not exhaust grace; it not only justifies; it also sanctifies. It was grace that saved Zachaeus, delivered him from the slavery of Mammon, and then moved him to generosity. It was grace that set the adulteress free from her scarlet reputation and then turned her into a herald to her townspeople. The grace our God entrusts to his servants is many-faceted (1 Peter 4:10). He adapts it to our varying needs and circumstances.

Grace personalized

God bestowed his grace in a specialized way on the

severely-tested Macedonians (2 Corinthians 8). "Grace Macedonian style" made them as concerned about others as they were about themselves and moved them to sacrifice accordingly.

In Paul's case it was grace converting that vicious enemy of Christ into a repentant believer and into a commissioned apostle all in one convincing encounter. Still to come were the treasures of enabling grace that our Lord would grant him for his assignment. Paul later acknowledged grace that made his work effective and grace that fitted him for ministering to Gentiles. Oft mentioned for upholding him as he faced antagonism and endured Satan's vexing thorn is God's sustaining grace.

Grace available

All of this encourages us to capitalize on God's fullness of grace in our individual needs and circumstances. "One blessing after another" is the wording of John 1:16. The one who is full of grace and truth has grace to raise the fallen and to cheer the faint, as well as grace to cover all our sin.

Do we face personal doubts and crises? Do we need help to minimize the consequences of past offenses and avoid future ones? What about the conflicts that strain family ties? Does each of us recognize that self-interest has to be overcome in ourselves first if we are to live together according to God's design? Do we need grace to be able to bear up without bitterness because someone we were depending on has disappointed us? Do we need a measure of personalized grace to face failing health without losing our trust and hope in God?

We need not be disheartened by the question of whether we deserve God's strength; the fact is we do not. But it is not on the basis of merit that we seek his help. For Jesus' sake we can turn to him for grace — undeserved and sufficient to every need. □



Robert Hochmuth is pastor of St. Andrew, Sacramento, California.

Tragic folly

A District of Columbia appeals court recently ruled that Georgetown University must grant homosexual groups access to university benefits and services, including the ability to apply for school funds to subsidize their activities. Georgetown University is a church-related institution which teaches that homosexuality is a sin. Now a court of law has declared that the university must tolerate homosexuality on its campus and even lend support to the practice it condemns.

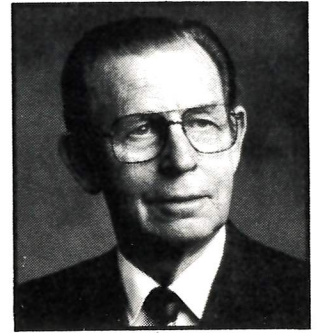
Homosexual groups are poised and determined to press courts to compel other religious schools to give homosexuals equal rights. Christian schools in our country have reason to be alarmed. The goal is to make homosexuality legal and respectable — by force of law. Would our WELS schools be requested to add to the “Non-discriminatory Admissions Policy” statements they carry in their admissions literature: “It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin” — the phrase “and sexual orientation”?

This — despite the fact that homosexuality is a sinful perversion, and a defense of it is both absurd and tragic. It is absurd to defend a practice that is an obvious physical and biological perversion of nature and that is filthy and disgusting. It is irrational not to admit that AIDS is a penalty for a perversion, when emphysema and cirrhosis are recognized as penalties for excesses in smoking and drinking. God has plainly declared that man is responsible for his sin, including homosexuality. Unbiased research also shows that it is unwarranted to maintain that homosexual behavior is inborn and that therefore the homosexual has no choice but to act out his lust. “Any man can be a homosexual, but no man has to be” (George Gilder). It makes no sense to expect the adulterer and the child molester to curb their lust (which they might also maintain is inborn), while the homosexual is not held to the same kind of constraint.

It is tragic for churches to sell out their moral and spiritual authority when, in the name of “compassion,” they make void the clear and unmistakable indictment of homosexuality cited in Leviticus and Romans, and thus blight the trust their people have in their church when it declares, “This is what the Lord says.”

It is tragic for homosexuals to be reassured that there is no sin in their perverted sex and that they need feel no guilt for their sexual indulgence. It is tragic that they are conned into believing that they had no choice but to slake their passion. It is tragic for them to be told, “You don’t have to repent.” It is the tragedy of tragedies then to be denied the privilege of confessing their damning sin and guilt and of hearing that their Savior died to forgive the sins of homosexuals too. Not to get to hear that word of grace, because sin is not admitted and repented of, is immeasurably more tragic than to hear that AIDS has no cure.

Carleton Toppe



Carleton Toppe is the retired president of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin.

Colossians 1:24 — 2:19

by Julian G. Anderson

It might be helpful to reread the section, Troubles in Colossae, in the last issue before going on, noting that the gnostics' knowledge was a secret affair. Then we continue at Colossians 1:24, where Paul says his task is

To make God's secret known

Paul first mentions his present sufferings, and then reminds the Christians in Colossae that his God-given task was to bring them "God's message in its fullness," a favorite gnostic word. Then he continues, "that message was a secret which had been hidden from eternity from all the nations. But now it has been revealed to God's people. For God wanted his people to know what a rich and wonderful thing that secret is. And this is the secret — having Christ in your heart is your hope of glory and honor." Notice the emphasis — God's message centers in Christ.

"I want you to know that I'm worried about you, that you may not have the full knowledge [*gnosis*] of God's secret, which is Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (also a gnostic term).

Don't let anyone fool you and lead you astray

"I'm telling you all this so that no one will fool you with high pressure sales talk. And I'm filled with joy as I see you all standing together, and how firm your faith is! And since you have accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must be living for him! He must be the soil which supplies you with life and strength, and the foundation on which your life is built. And you must also keep on growing stronger in your faith, and be overflowing with thankfulness.

You are now free from all the powers of evil

"Watch out so that no one will make you his slaves by his human wisdom and worthless, false ideas which are based on men's teachings and laws which govern our lives in this world, and not on Christ. You see, the whole fullness [*pleroma*] of the true God lives in Christ, in his human body, and he fills your hearts. He is also the head of every ruler and authority [gnostic powers]. And he circumcised you in a way that can't be done by human hands, when he stripped off your sinful mind and body.

"This all happened when you were buried with Christ by baptism and then raised back to life again

with him through the faith that was created in your hearts by God, who raised Jesus back to life from the dead. Yes, you people were dead because of your sins, and because of the uncircumcision of your sinful nature. But God made you alive with Christ, because he had forgiven all our sins, and cancelled the debt we owed him because of his law. And it was a debt which threatened to destroy us. But God removed that debt completely when he nailed it to Jesus' cross. And after he had taken away the power of the rulers and authorities [gnostic powers], he paraded them around as his captives as he celebrated the victory he had won over them by Jesus' death."

Verses 11-14 above, with their references to circumcision and the law, tell us that these false prophets were Jewish gnostics.

Don't lose your freedom

This section continues the attack on the Jewish gnostics. "No one has the authority to say that you're right or wrong about what you're eating or drinking, or what you are doing about a religious festival or a new moon festival or a sabbath day. These things are just a shadowy picture of things to come. But the person who was casting that shadow was Christ.

"But now there are people who want to take away your prize. And they're trying to do so by urging you to be lowly and humble, and to worship the angels. They're telling you all about the visions and things they have seen, and they're all puffed up by their sinful human minds, although there isn't any reason for them to be so proud. So don't let anyone like this rob you, because he isn't connected with Christ our head, who supplies his whole body with everything it needs by the arteries, and holds it together by the muscles, so that it keeps growing the way God wants it to grow."

This section shows how familiar with gnosticism Paul was, and in his rebuttal he focuses the attention of his readers on the Scriptures, the Triune God, and above all, on Christ, the Messiah and ruler of all things. □



Julian Anderson is a retired pastor and seminary professor living in Naples, Florida.



The compulsive gambler

by Thomas B. Franzmann

The telephone rang in my study. It was a voice I did not recognize. The caller identified himself as a WELS member from Wisconsin who had moved to our area. He wanted to talk to a pastor. I asked what we would be talking about. Hesitantly he told me he was a compulsive gambler. His wife was leaving him, he was in trouble at work and he had debts. I agreed to see him that evening. But while I was making hospital calls that afternoon, he left a message at the church office that he could not make it. When I called to make another appointment, his number had been disconnected. If he was like most compulsive gamblers, the old feeling that his luck would be changing probably crept over him shortly after he called me.

Compulsive gambling. What is it? How serious is it? Most of us have had some experience with another condition — alcoholism. We have witnessed alcoholics state their good intentions only to give them up within a short time. We have known the frustration of trying to follow the thought patterns of the alcoholic. Is compulsive gambling similar? Do we face similar frustrations when dealing with habitual gamblers?

An article in the December 1985 issue of *Psychology Today* titled "Against All Odds," said: "Bernie Z. used to keep a radio under his pillow for 24-hour contact with sports results. It murmured away even on those rare occasions when he made love to his wife. John M. made the five-hour round-trip drive to the Monticello Raceway every night for seven years. Jeannie D. used every ploy from prostitution to pos-

ing as a United Way solicitor to buy her way back into poker games. These people are all compulsive gamblers, the type likely to be at the racetrack while their child is having surgery, or to curse a grandmother for dying before she could be hit for a final loan."

Is compulsive gambling a rare thing? According to *The Badger Lutheran* (February 1978), "Gambling is often addicting, as much so as alcohol or drugs. It is estimated there are six million compulsive gamblers in the US, all of whom are sick." In 1985 *Psychology Today* placed the estimate at ten million. That's one out of every 24 people in America. You probably have neighbors, relatives, loved ones who are gamblers. That's not rare. And the number is growing.

How does one become a compulsive gambler? As in the case of alcoholism, experts do not agree. Some are convinced that it is learned behavior, often starting in early childhood. *Psychology Today* in its article said: "Male gamblers, for instance, are usually confirmed in the habit by their late teens, weaned on penny ante poker and crap games with schoolmates or presiding over baseball pools. A stint in the service often affords the ideal opportunity to perfect their skills. They tend to marry young and may honeymoon in a casino."

Others see a chemical cause. *Psychology Today* (May 1985, "Brain Chemicals and the Gambler's High") says: "It's an expensive habit — often consuming half one's income — and can lead to enormous debts. . . . Its victims become 'hooked' and suffer withdrawal symptoms akin to those seen in other addicts. And now, recent research has suggested that

like other addictions, compulsive gambling may, in part, have a physiological basis. . . . Alex P. Blaszczyński and his colleagues tested the hypothesis that the 'high' experienced by compulsive gamblers comes from the release of B-endorphin, a natural chemical whose morphine-like effects — both euphoria and protection against pain — 'reinforce' the behavior."

Both sides agree that, regardless of what causes underlie the beginning of the gambler's downward slide, the ready availability of opportunities to gamble causes a marked increase in the number of people who fall victim to this disease. While it is true that many compulsive gamblers will find outlets for their urge no matter what, many others seem more able to curb their desires in an environment in which gambling is not a common practice. Researchers are finding, for example, the longer a state has a legal lottery, the more cases of compulsive gambling turn up. These then require the state to develop programs to treat the gamblers and to aid their victims.

My Cousin the Gambler, an eye-opening article in the December 1987 issue of *Reader's Digest*, tells the story of a compulsive gambler who started showing signs of his illness in childhood. At first it seemed cute. But as the story unfolds, it became clear that he had a serious problem. His own considerable talent was largely wasted, and virtually every life he touched was adversely affected by his addiction.

Gamblers, like alcoholics, also have greatly varying degrees of addiction. Some alcoholics never wind up in the gutter on skid row, yet their addiction is real. They must have their drinks regularly. Because of the money they spend on alcohol, their loved ones often do without pleasures they would prefer, or even without necessities to which they would normally be entitled. So with gamblers. They may not sell the homestead in order to feed their habit, but they often do spend money that could have, should have, been spent on other things. The people around them, without a lot of choice in the matter, help to pay for their thrills.

Why doesn't the compulsive gambler just quit and "straighten out"? In "Against All Odds," the article in *Psychology Today*, the author points out: "Compulsive gamblers have a seemingly limitless capacity for self-delusion, believing that the next bet will result in a big win; that the next bailout will send them on the road to fat city. 'Every time I bought a lottery ticket I was dreaming about what I was going to do with the million dollars,' one recovering gambler says.

"Arnold Wexler, president of the Council on Compulsive Gambling in New Jersey, says he experienced

one of his biggest highs while he was parking his car at the Aqueduct racetrack: 'I looked at the stands, and there were 60,000 people in there. I had \$6 in my pocket and I owed \$10,000. And I was thinking, look at all those people there — and I'll be taking home their money.' "

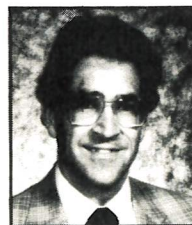
Gamblers vary greatly in their habits, making it difficult to establish a pattern that fits the majority. Yet researchers, according to *Psychology Today*, are able to list the following three stages:

- 1) Winning. Usually a big win early in a gambling career firmly locks the gambler onto a ruinous path.
- 2) Losing. For a compulsive gambler, the idea of quitting while ahead is unthinkable. On the contrary, losses must be made up even if retirement funds must be drained or a wife's jewelry pawned or sold. (Friends and relatives bail them out, which reinforces their behavior.)
- 3) Desperation. Hounded by creditors, terrorized by loan sharks, in trouble with the law and with family, with job and health in shambles, the gambler is a piteous wreck at wits' end.

Among gamblers the incidence of drug abuse, cardiovascular problems, legal problems and suicide attempts is dramatically higher.

What can be done? Gamblers Anonymous is an organization which began in 1957. Its program is much like that of Alcoholics Anonymous in that it sets up a support group consisting of people who have been through the experience themselves. This group has been able to help many gamblers.

At the very least Christians should be aware of the problem, acquire some understanding of it and know where it is likely to lead the gambler. You may be able to gamble without becoming addicted, but can your neighbor? How about your children or your grandchildren? Might you, by your choice of pastime or vacation, be starting them out on a path they cannot control? If the statistics are correct — and why should we doubt that they are off by much — aren't the odds too high, the risks too great, to gamble on them? Are we really exercising Christian love if we knowingly take that chance? □



Thomas Franzmann is pastor of St. Mark, Citrus Heights, California.

by Ernst H. Wendland

Within the next two years at least 34 missionary families are scheduled to return to the United States. An estimated 125 persons are involved in this displacement. They will be returning from various parts of Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia. Most of them will be coming back for a two to three month furlough.

Think of the logistics involved — the planning, the packing, the travel, the housing, the use of vehicles, the cost. Ten pages of the *WELS World Mission Handbook* have to do with the procedures pertaining to all this moving about. But whether we like it or not, furloughs are a necessity. There are any number of reasons why those who are sent to work in foreign parts must return to the home base periodically.

The *Handbook* defines a furlough as “a leave given to return to the home country from field service.” Among the “purpose of furloughs” are listed: rest, revitalization, reunion with family and friends, medical checkups, lecturing/preaching, professional growth, personal matters and various meetings. Enough items, to be sure, to question how all these affairs can be taken care of in the allotted time. Small wonder that missionaries sometimes comment that the acronymic furlough designation “R and R,” which stands for “Rest and Relaxation,” more often turns out to be a biennial or triennial “Re-entry Rampage,” or less euphemistically a “Rat Race.”

A big adjustment

We are inclined to think first of the physical upsets involved when people go overseas for awhile and then come back home. Have we ever given much thought to the emotional readjustments that are required? These are what missiological experts refer to as “re-entry shock,” or “culture shock in reverse.”

Most people realize that when an American goes overseas to live for awhile, he's going to have to make some changes in his life-style. Are we equally aware, however, that those who have had to adjust to a third world culture are going to have problems adapting to the home culture again? This can become even more frustrating because one doesn't always anticipate that an adjustment is so necessary at all. After all, aren't these people simply returning to the familiar home base?

No longer the same

The topographical surroundings at the home base, however, are no longer quite the same. That friendly little general store right around the corner isn't there



Missionaries *Strangers at home*

any more. It has been replaced by a gigantic shopping center where one can't find what one is looking for.

Driving on the freeways isn't the time-saving, pleasurable experience it once was. Not only has traffic increased considerably, but many of the drivers are much more offensive than they used to be. And don't they realize that some people have just come from a country where people drive on opposite sides of the road? And whatever happened to that beautiful countryside? Urban America is on a roll. Another used-car lot has replaced a cornfield!

on furlough



The people at home are somehow no longer the same. In a roomful of people one is often on the outside looking in. At a synodical meeting one feels more like a stranger, or at best an object of curiosity. There are so many important things to say — but people don't seem to be all that interested, seemingly more obsessed with "things" than with "persons," surrounded by wealth yet incessantly worried about the future. And why is everybody in such a hurry? As one returning missionary put it, "It's like seeing everybody else marching in time with the drummer, while

you're busily trying to catch up and join in step."

The returning missionary is no longer the same. Coming from a developing nation where the average per capita income may be \$75.00 per year, where people stand in line for hours to purchase some little necessity, where Christians may be as few as one percent of the population, where nearly 50 percent of infants never reach the age of five years, where churches are made mostly out of mud and thatch and no musical instrument accompanies the singing, he finds that he has acquired a different sense of values.

The missionary wonders why people in general focus so much on "comfortable living and gracious dining," on "how to get the most out of life," on "pleasures which know no boundaries." Even in church life he finds himself becoming resentful about the emphasis on local needs rather than on the desperate need for the gospel on far-flung battlefronts of the world.

A privileged change

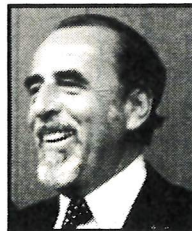
And so there they are, these returning missionary families — for the moment rather bewildered by it all. Will they ever be on the inside again? Will they be able to march in step? Perhaps not. But is that so bad? They have been privileged to have seen things which others have not seen, to have had experiences which others haven't had. Most of them wouldn't trade this for anything.

Perhaps not everybody has seen the filth and squalor of an overseas shantytown, or has heard the wails of the bereaved at a heathen burial. But neither has everybody had the privilege of bringing the gospel to people who are really hearing it for the first time, and praising God, in a different way, perhaps, but without any inhibitions whatsoever.

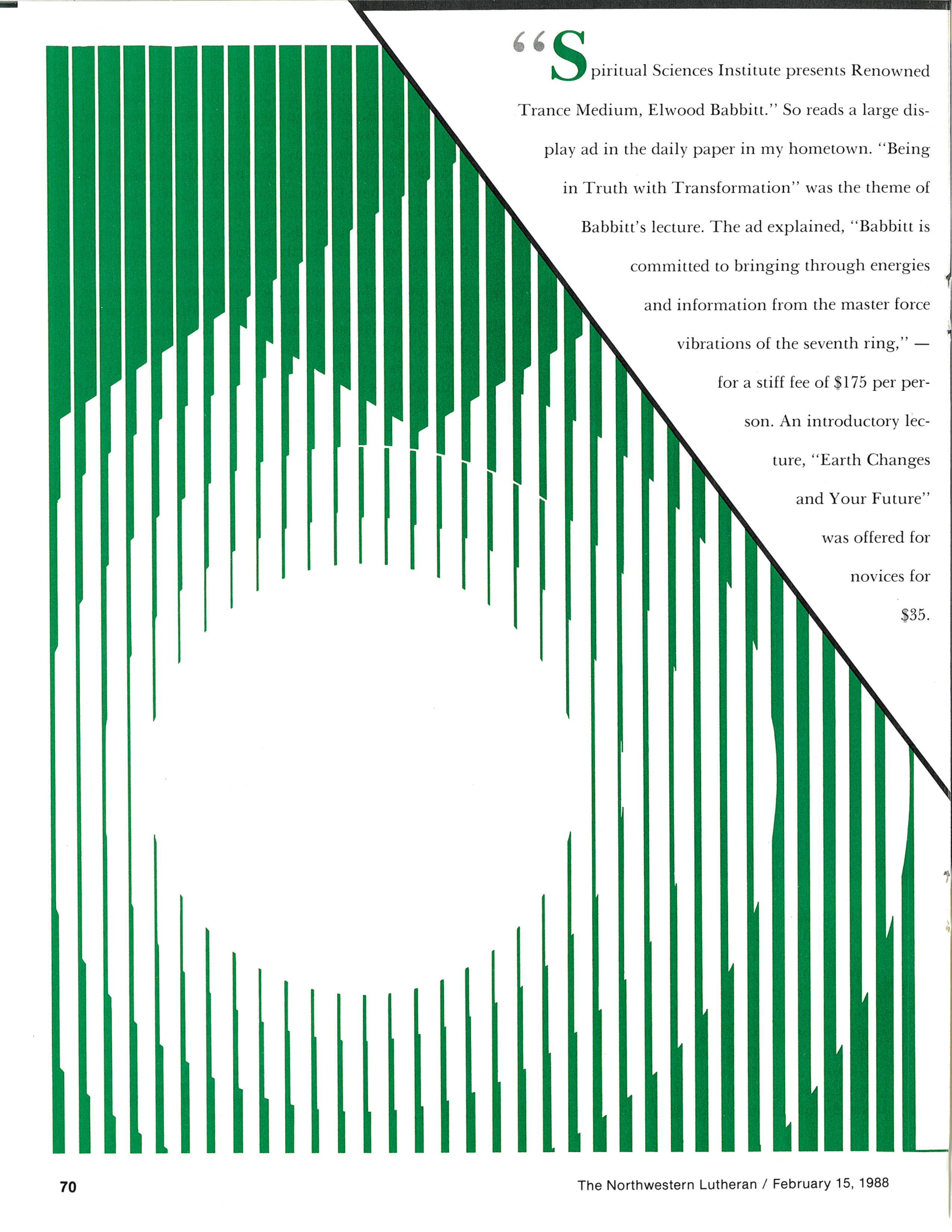
A plea for understanding

"Change and decay in all around I see," we sing in a familiar hymn. By virtue of the call we have extended, our returning missionaries and their families have experienced the truth of these words more suddenly than most of us. As they return to the home base, they need our understanding, our sympathetic ear, our encouragement, our continued support. And we need their understanding as well. We still have a lot to learn about how things really are in other parts of the world.

They must keep on telling us this! □



Ernst Wendland, who was a missionary in Zambia for 16 years, is retired but still teaching part-time at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.



“Spiritual Sciences Institute presents Renowned Trance Medium, Elwood Babbitt.” So reads a large display ad in the daily paper in my hometown. “Being in Truth with Transformation” was the theme of Babbitt’s lecture. The ad explained, “Babbitt is committed to bringing through energies and information from the master force vibrations of the seventh ring,” — for a stiff fee of \$175 per person. An introductory lecture, “Earth Changes and Your Future” was offered for novices for \$35.

The same day I clipped that ad from the paper the postman delivered an invitation to another presentation. This one featured Margaret Fuller and Phyllis Myers Weis of the Lively Stones Fellowship. Their ad says, "Their ministry is considered by many to bridge the gap between traditional churches and New Age spirituality."

Both presentations are examples of the New Age phenomenon that is sweeping across America. What began in the '60s as an offshoot of the hippie movement has become a force to be reckoned with in the '80s. The New Age has indeed come of age.

The current "pop" priestess of the New Age philosophy is actress/author Shirley MacLaine. MacLaine introduced the masses to the New Age with her two best sellers, *Out On a Limb* and *Dancing in the Light*. An ABC mini-series, which took its name from her book, *Out On a Limb*, brought the MacLaine story to the public on prime time TV twice during the past year.

The New Age is a term that covers what some refer to as the human potential movement. Other names by which it is known include New Wave, The Third Force, Empowering the Self, New Thought Religion and The Age of Aquarius. It involves a vast network of organizations. Some of them are cult-type organizations. Some are health organizations which promote holistic health and homeopathic medicine. Some are political organizations such as the California New Age Caucus.

One of the super salesmen of the New Age philosophy is Stephen Appelbaum. In his book, *Out in Inner Space*, Appelbaum defines the new movement in this way: "Human potential movement is a loose, informal term that refers to a wide variety of activities, all resting on the belief that there is more to most of us than meets the eye, that we have much unrealized potential. It further rests on the assumption that individual change can be brought about through self help."

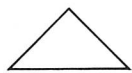
It is that notion of self help that makes the New Age philosophy so appealing to people. All you have to do is to learn the secret of tapping untapped resources within yourself to become a new you.

The secret of tapping those untapped resources is something a devotee may learn through a medium or a channel. Channelers are persons through whom people who lived in the past are able to communicate with people living in the present. Like channeler Z. K. Knight from Yelm, Washington. Knight has amassed a fortune as the spokesperson for Ramtha.

Ramtha was once a fierce warrior who lived 40,000 years ago. He evolved through reincarnation into a wise and good man who learned the truth about the universe. He now shares that truth with the world

The *New Age* movement

*It can't
be ignored*



by Joel C. Gerlach

through his channeler, Miss Knight — for \$400 for a two-hour session.

Some Christians have a tendency just to dismiss New Agers as weird. To do so is to blind one's self to a fundamental and critical change in thinking that is taking place in the Western world. Observers agree that the basic philosophical quest in the world today is for an integrated view of this world and of our life in it. There is a need to integrate rational philosophy, spiritual belief, scientific knowledge, personal experience and direct observation into an organic whole.

New Agers believe they have found the answer to that integration. Christianity does not have the answer. Eastern mysticism does. New Agers are convinced they are in a position to lead mankind in a process of transforming its way of thinking and living. The end result will be a new age of total integration in which unity, peace and harmony prevail.

Students of history will say, "We've heard that song before." So will students of the Bible. So what's new about the New Age view of things? Nothing really. New Age beliefs are more novel than new.

Mystical enlightenment is the means by which New Agers hope to transform individuals and society in their effort to usher in a Utopian era of unity, harmony and progress. Mystical enlightenment means that you discover truth within yourself rather than look for revelation of truth outside yourself. The reason you can do that is because you are God. That is the "truth" at the heart of New Age thinking. To a Christian that is blasphemous. To a New Ager it is the answer to all the world's problems.

If the notion that you are God sounds strange to you, it should. But many people, Hindus for example, are as comfortable with that thought as you are with the words "I believe in God the Father." Hindus have convinced New Agers that recognizing man's own divinity is the key to solving the riddle of human existence.

David Spangler, an influential leader in the New Age movement, says, "Religions often show us how we are different from God, and dependent upon the divine presence for our very existence; mysticism shows us how we are one with God and coparticipants with divinity in the unfoldment of creation." That is a simple way of expressing Hinduism's chief article of faith, "God is all, all is God."

Because this is so completely foreign to our way of thinking, it might be helpful to let a Hindu explain how he comes to that conclusion. "In the beginning there was existence alone — One only, without a second. He, the One, thought to himself: Let me be many, let me grow forth. Thus out of himself he projected the universe; and having projected out of

The world craves peace. People are seeking answers to eternal questions.



.....
himself the universe, he entered into every being. . . . Of all things he is the subtle essence. He is the Self, and that you are too."

Part of the appeal of Hinduism in the Western world lies in its ability to accommodate other religions and ideas. When Buddhism challenged Hinduism in the sixth century B.C., Hindus simply added Buddha to their pantheon of gods. When Christianity came to India in the first century of the Christian era, Hinduism made Jesus the 10th reincarnation of their god Vishnu. When Muslims invaded India in the 11th century, the prophet Mohammed was added to the Hindu's long list of holy men.

Another aspect of Hinduism that makes it appealing to Westerners is the fact that it has no central authority, no hierarchy, no direct revelation, no rigid moral code. You can pick and choose what you want to believe. But the essential message is always the same: God is all, all is God. As the Upanishads declare: "Thou (Brahmin — the eternal spirit) art woman. Thou art man. Thou art the dark-blue bee and the green parrot with red eyes. Thou hast the lightning as thy child. Thou art the seasons and the seas. Thou dost abide with all-pervadingness. Wherefrom all things are born."

That is the spirit of the New Age view of truth and reality. In her book, *Dancing In the Light*, Shirley MacLaine offers a commentary on what this means for a New Ager. She relates a conversation between Kevin, an American trance medium, and Vassy, a Christian. Kevin is trying to lead Vassy to a higher understanding of the truth. Kevin says, "I don't believe there is any such thing as evil."

To Vassy that seems absurd. Kevin continues, "No, wait a minute. We are not under the law of God. We are as the law of God. We are God. We have to totally accept ourselves — to accept the laws of self which are divine. Then we become God. And God and self are one — therefore we are basically total love. You do agree that God is total love?"

Vassy agrees that God is love but still insists that you cannot just ignore the fact of evil. Kevin responds, "It doesn't exist. That's the point. Everything in life is either illumination or ignorance. These are the two polarities. Not good and evil. And when you are totally illuminated, such as Jesus Christ, or Buddha, or some of those people, there is no struggle any longer."

There you have a 20th century version of what Satan said to Eve in Eden. It had appeals then. It still does. Satan has lost none of his prowess in passing himself off as "an angel of light."

Part of the problem we Christians face as we confront the New Age phenomenon is the bewildering complexity of forms in which we meet it today in the marketplace of ideas. A Lucis Trust ad in the Reader's Digest offers card copies of "The Great Invocation" free of charge. Kids in school are introduced to "imaging," "visualization," and "values clarification." Some of them are convinced that parental values are valid only for parents.

Employees of large corporations are urged to participate in company-sponsored "productivity train-

ing” seminars. Ads in local papers advertise “Positive Thinking Rallies” and elements of the New Age philosophy frequently infiltrate there too. Early morning TV programs offer training in “meditation” techniques. Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue and Larry King compete with one another to sign up psychics, spiritists, occultists, channelers and gurus as guests on their talk shows.

Magazines and books which popularize the New Age philosophy proliferate at a rate that suggests that middle-Americans are eager to learn what it’s all about. Following ABC’s airing of “Out On a Limb,” Shirley MacLaine launched a nationwide series of seminars to capitalize on her notoriety. Her purpose, she said, was “to teach participants to get in touch with their ‘higher self.’ ”

Brooks Alexander, a staff writer for Berkeley’s Spiritual Counterfeits Project who critiques religious trends from a Christian perspective, is disturbed over the fact that so many Christians remain in the dark about the New Age movement.

In an interview with Bill Squires, Alexander noted, “Very few Christians watched the MacLaine series at all. Now I can understand why it is not good to subject yourself to too much of this sort of thing. But there was, I think, too much of a defensive mentality — almost self-righteousness — against watching it. And this is why Christians at large are so ignorant of what is going on. That is why no one realizes how urgent the situation is.”

The New Age is here to stay. And Christians cannot afford to stick their heads in the sand and ignore it. The growing interest in the New Age movement is evidence that people are disillusioned with the promise of modern technology to solve the world’s problems.

People are equally disillusioned with the social gospel brand of “Christianity” as an integrating agent in contemporary society. The world craves peace. People are seeking answers to eternal questions. And Satan is still finding ways to blind people to God’s answer to their questions.

The New Age movement is yet another challenge to the Christian church to get the truth out, the truth about the unity only the gospel can create, and the truth about the peace only the gospel can give.

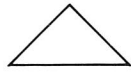
Many New Agers have dismissed Christianity because it doesn’t solve the problems with which they

are struggling. But the Christianity they have dismissed is a counterfeit Christianity. Many do not really know what the gospel is. They need to be introduced to the genuine thing.

The New Age view of reality is in conflict with biblical truth at a number of essential points. Those points need to be emphasized. The first is the truth that God is a supreme, transcendent being apart from human beings and from the created world. God is not all and all is not God.

The counterpart to that is the truth that you and I are creatures of God, separate and distinct from God.

Man’s basic problem is sin, not ignorance. So our basic need is for forgiveness, not illumination.



We don’t enter this world as emanations from God who through a series of reincarnations become more and more divine. We don’t merge back into God. We retain our separateness and our identity through all eternity.

Another truth that needs to be emphasized is the fact that man’s basic problem is sin, not ignorance. So our basic need is for forgiveness, not illumination. Man reaches his destiny in communion with God through Christ, not in the ultimate discovery of one’s true self. Reincarnation is a myth that conveniently hides the truth that “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

In the final analysis, the New Age movement is an ego trip. At the end of that trip, New Agers will discover that Ramtha’s and Mafu’s and Lazaris’ real name is Lucifer. The smile on his face is not going to be a welcome smile. It will be a smug smile that says that “the father of lies” has claimed another victim.

In a word, the word on the New Age movement is: “Be informed, and beware! Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists; for you will

be defiled by them. I am the

Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:31). □



Joel Gerlach is pastor of Our Redeemer, Santa Barbara, California.

First issue of new magazine . . . The first issue of "The Lutheran," magazine of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has appeared and was distributed to its 1.2 million subscribers. "It is by far the largest denominational periodical published in North America. It is also the largest Lutheran publication in the world," writes Editor Edgar Trexler in the first issue dated January 6, 1988. The magazine will be published 18 times a year. A magazine named "The Lutheran" has been published since 1860 although the magazine traces its history through predecessor bodies to 1831. Previously "The Lutheran" had been the name of the magazine of the Lutheran Church in America.

Telephone marketing starts new churches . . . *A technique that applies telephone marketing to new church development has planted more than 300 congregations in the past two years and is being used by more than 50 denominations. An initial telephone call to 20,000 people is followed up with five mailings and a final call, which typically results in 200 people attending the first service of a new church. Although the number may dwindle to half that by the second service, even 100 active worshipers make up a congregation large enough to support a pastor. C. Peter Wagner, church growth expert, says the 100 figure is larger than that of most Protestant churches. "Fifty percent have 75 people or less in attendance," he says.*

A giant step toward re-union. . . According to observers the five-day visit of Dimitrios I of Constantinople, Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church, at Rome recently "represented a giant step toward" reunion of the two churches after a division of more than 900 years. Observers also said that "the respectful tone of the entire visit" indicates that the pope sees the Eastern Orthodox Church as a "sister church." Still to be ironed out are difficulties over the primacy of the pope, the Bishop of Rome, and his infallibility. The Orthodox churches have made it clear that they would be willing to recognize a "primacy of honor" for the Roman pontiff. But for Rome this does not appear sufficient.

Episcopal bishop denounces fellow bishop . . . *A retired Episcopal bishop has denounced what he called the "total vacuum in moral leadership from the church's national headquarters." Bishop Clarence R. Haden, retired bishop of Northern California, cited Bishop John S. Spong of Newark, N. J., who supported a paper on whether the church should ever condone sexual relationships between homosexuals*

and unmarried couples. According to Bishop Haden, Bishop Spong's theology "is a present-day upsurge of man-centered doctrine and is nothing new. It is as old as sin. Spong and his diocesan committee proclaim the virtues of homosexual marriage and intimate heterosexual relations outside of marriage and say their position is valid because of a need to reflect changing social standards. In short, they are saying that because people are doing it, no matter how immoral it may be, the church should bless it. That position is not moral leadership; it is moral capitulation."

Largest Protestant school system . . . With some 1800 early childhood and elementary schools and 70 high schools the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, with 6000 congregations, has the largest Protestant parochial school system in the world. Some 40 percent of the students are non-Lutheran and another 11 percent are unchurched, according to the Board for Parish Services. From its beginnings in 1847, Missouri Synod schools have been an integral part of the ministry of the synod's congregations.

Day care proposal under fire . . . *A new day care proposal in Congress is under attack as "anti-religious." The bill, which would create a \$2.5 billion federal day care system, includes language that places heavy restriction on participation in the program by religious centers. Churches make up a sizable portion of the nation's day care providers. The measure excludes the participation of any "sectarian" programs, defined in the bill as that which "has the purpose or effect of advancing or promoting a particular religion or religion generally." It specifically prohibits parochial school teachers from performing day care activities and says churches cannot give preference to their members.*

Growing dissent among American Catholics . . . Dissent among American Catholics is growing at such a rate it may possibly lead to a "shell of a church" one day, according to James Davidson, a sociologist at Purdue University, who is tabulating the results of a recent Gallup study of Catholic attitudes. More than half of the 803 people surveyed nationally said a person can be considered a good Catholic even if he or she doesn't go to confession, obey the church teachings, give money to the pope, go to Easter mass or remarries after divorce. A startling 70 percent said it wasn't necessary to go to weekly mass, considered a moral obligation by the church. □

News items appearing in News Around the World represent current events of general interest to the readers of The Northwestern Lutheran and should not be interpreted as representing the views of the editors.



Mrs. Alma Benedum of Kewaskum, Wis., celebrated her 100th birthday January 29. She faithfully attends church at Zion, Allenton, according to her pastor, Dennis Strong. Getting around with a cane, she still helps with the laundry and regularly cooks.

Top stories of 1987

The PTL financial and sex scandal was the most significant news story in religion in 1987, according to a poll of the Religion Newswriters Association. Second on the list was Pope John Paul II's 10-day visit to the United States. Coming in third was Pat Robertson's entry into the presidential race.

Formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Columbus, Ohio, was next, followed by Oral Roberts' claim that he raised people from the dead. Sixth was the debate in religious circles on condoms and sex education. Austrian President Kurt Waldheim's visit to the pope was seventh.

In eighth place was a district judge's order banning use of 44 textbooks in Alabama's public schools. Next was the election of Rev. Adrian Rogers, a conservative, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, followed by the Vatican condemnation of test tube fertilization.

The Religious Newswriters Association is made up of journalists who report news of religion for newspapers, news magazines and news services for the secular press. Willmar Thorkelson of Minneapolis, former RNA president, polled the writers.

Farm Crisis Seminar video available

As part of its 90th anniversary celebration, The Lutheran Home of Belle Plaine, Minn., has produced *Farm Crisis Seminar*, a two-part video tape production. Each segment is one hour in length.

The video presentation "comes at a crucial time," said Pastor Robert W. Schlicht, administrator of the home. "The last ten years have been some of the most traumatic for our rural farm and business families since the years of the great depression."

The idea for the video, said Schlicht, came "when we saw farm families of WELS churches involved in the crisis through loss of income, farm or business. Some families around here have faced abandonment of property often held for generations, relocation, retraining and stress-related ill-

nesses."

The video focuses on the special needs of rural families in trouble, and how the church and individuals can provide help and support as well.

The video, according to Schlicht, "features a distinguished panel of Christian professionals and farm families. On the panel are a pastor, attorney, state legislator, certified public accountant, three farm families and a farm crisis mediator. Moderator of the panel is Pastor David Ponath, first vice-president of the synod's Minnesota District."

Any family in trouble, rural or urban, added Schlicht, will profit from the video, which provides also for audience participation.

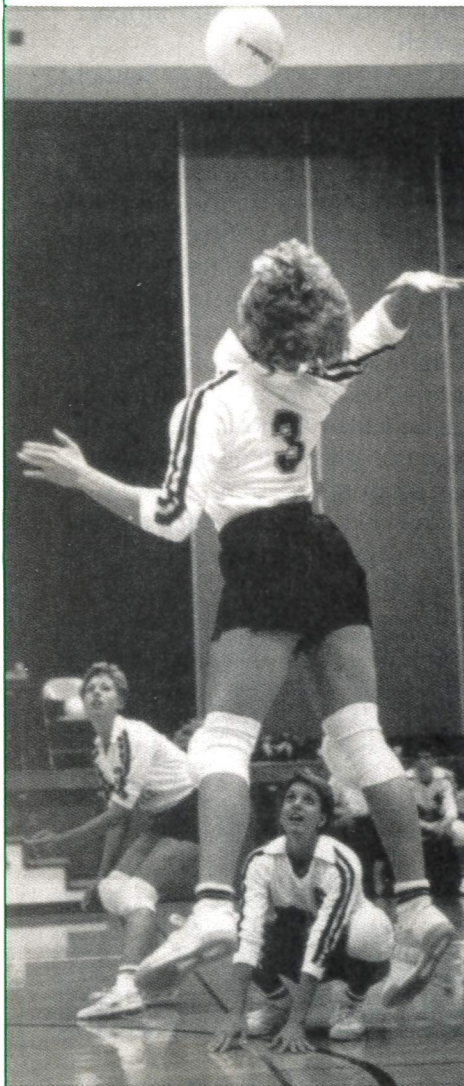
The video may be ordered from The Lutheran Home, Belle Plaine, MN 56011.



Alfons Woldt (right), administrator for the Special Ministries Board, received a Christian Service Award, a new award presented at the annual meeting of Bethesda Lutheran Home, Watertown, Wis. Other first-time recipients of the award were Mrs. Gertrude Koehlinger, who in 1957 started the first Sunday school for the retarded in the Missouri Synod and Marshall Nelson (left) who was the first director of the Missouri Synod's Commission for Services to the Mentally Retarded. Woldt was cited for developing "various books and written brochures on religious special education. He started Saturday schools for retarded youngsters in the Milwaukee area and initiated a pen pal program in which retarded people write to other retarded people. He started 'He Cares — We Care,' a ministry by mail to retarded people, and arranged for WELS planned giving counselors to learn about advocacy and survivorship issues related to retarded individuals." The awards, for voluntary and professional service to the retarded, will be given annually.

Anniversaries celebrated

On November 15, the Conference of Presidents celebrated the 40th anniversary in the ministry of Pastor Kurt J. Eggert, project di-



The Dr. Martin Luther College Lancer volleyball team for the third year in a row recorded a national championship victory. In 1987 with a 21-5 record, the Lancers took first place in the conference, won the Northern District NLCAA tournament and went on to St. Louis to capture the national championship. Lynn Stobb for the Lancers spikes a ball and teammate Jackie Valleskey crouches to guard against a block. Prof. Drew Buck coaches the Lancers.

rector for the new/revised hymnal, and Pastor James P. Schaefer, editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, at a special service at Atonement, Milwaukee, where both had served as pastors. Guest speaker at the service was Pastor William J. Schaefer II. A reception followed the service.

Eggert, a 1947 seminary graduate, served congregations in Valley City, N. D., Farmington, Wis., and Milwaukee before accepting the call in 1984 as hymnal project director. He served as head of the music department at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, from 1966 until it was closed as a synodical ministerial school in 1970. He has also served on the Commission on Worship, the Coordinating Council, the Board

Eight graduated from DMLC

In a special service on December 18 Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., graduated eight with a BSE degree. Guest speaker at the service was Pastor Don H. Scheuerlein, of St. Paul, New Ulm.

Dr. Arthur J. Schulz, vice-president for academic affairs, conferred the degrees on the following: Katrina Bufe, Eugene Martens and Wendy Mosher, all from Michigan; Guy Gast and Julie Russell from Illinois; Beverly Gray and Rebecca Valleskey from Wisconsin; and Marilyn Hanel from California.

All the graduates were recommended by the faculty to the synod's Assignment Committee for their assignment into the teaching ministry.

The service was followed in the evening with the DMLC annual Christmas concert, attended by 1600. The wind ensemble, handbell choir and four college choirs presented the message of Christmas in song.

for Parish Education, and as chairman of the Commission on Higher Education.

Schaefer, also a 1947 seminary graduate, served Atonement for 20 years when he was called to be the synod's first stewardship counselor in 1967. He has served as chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Matters, executive director of the Missio Dei Offering (1965-66), chairman of the first Administration Survey Commission (1965-1969), member of the Public Relations Committee and of the Coordinating Council, and chairman of the division of administration and services. In 1982 he accepted a call as editor of *The Northwestern Lutheran*. He is currently a member of the Committee on Constitutional Matters and since 1962 has served as the synod's director of public relations.

Michigan District

St. John of Sturgis dedicated its new school on September 13. The headline of an editorial in the local paper read: "St. John's: School that Love Built." It was started in 1978 with one modular unit and one teacher/principal. In 1985, with the encouragement of a large memorial gift the school building committee worked on a plan to build the school with volunteer help. Except for the plumbing, heating and electrical work, all construction was done by members and includes two classrooms, kindergarten room, office, copy room and utility rooms. St. John has an enrollment of 36 students. Kenneth Zahn is principal and Ronald H. Raddatz is the pastor. . . . **Prince of Peace of Columbus, Ohio**, dedicated its new relocated church on January 17. John Chworowsky, district mission counselor, was guest preacher and a combined choir from WELS congregations in the Columbus

area sang. Mark Schroeder is pastor of Prince of Peace. . . . **Zion of Warren**, served by Pastor Irvin Weiss, celebrated its 50th anniversary on December 6. Pastor Leonard Koeninger preached for the special service, followed by a meal and program at a local restaurant. . . . A member of the senior class at Michigan Lutheran Seminary, **Norma Pauley from Freeland**, received an associate degree in liberal arts in December from Delta College, University Center, Mich. She began taking courses in a special program at the college when she was in the 8th grade. She will graduate from MLS in May and plans to attend Dr. Martin Luther College. She looks forward to teaching in a WELS grade school or high school. . . . **Mrs. Cleo Walling**, kindergarten teacher at St. John in Westland, is retiring after 29 years in the teaching ministry.

— Edward Schaeewe

WITH THE LORD

Sylvester J. Johnson 1907 — 1987

Pastor Sylvester J. Johnson was born November 13, 1907 in Menasha, Wis. He died December 24, 1987 in Peshtigo, Wis.

A 1937 graduate of Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Springfield, Ill., he served St. Matthew in Appleton until his retirement in 1981. During his ministry he also served on various synod boards and committees.

In 1940 he married Viola Strandes. He is survived by his wife; daughter, Gloria (E. A.) Meyer; sons, Mark (Karen), Paul (Kathleen) and Timothy (Robin); and six grandchildren.

Funeral services were held December 27, 1987, at Zion, Peshtigo and a memorial service was held January 3, 1988 at St. Matthew, Appleton, Wis.

NOTICES

The deadline for submitting items is five weeks before the date of issue

CHANGES IN MINISTRY

PASTORS:

Johnson, Ricky R., from King of Kings, Wasilla, Alaska, to Risen Savior, Chula Vista, Calif.
Schumann, James R., from Immanuel, Woodville, Wis., to Faith, Fond du Lac, Wis.
Seelhoff, Donald W. Jr., from Good Shepherd, Kearney, Nebr., to Redeemer, Roswell, N. Mex.
Thierfelder, Paul E., from Our Savior, Burlington, Iowa, to Exploratory, Green Bay, Wis.

ADDRESSES

PASTORS:

Dummann, Scott J., 501 Jefferson Ave., Sparta, WI 54656; 608/269-3837.
Hohenstein, Lloyd A., 7749 Newton Ave., N., Brooklyn Park, MN 55444; 612/561-7809.
Kneser, Thomas W., 500 E. Orchard Beach Ln., Rice Lake, WI 54868; 715/234-6031.
Kunde, Arnold J., S47 W23650 Lawnsdale Rd., Waukesha, WI 53186; 414/542-7902.
Kuske, John D., 60 T. Huxley Ln., Missouri City, TX 77459; 713/261-4122.
Thrams, James A., 132 S. Concord Ave., Watertown, WI 53094.

TEACHERS:

Lehninger, Robert F., 815 E. Knapp St., Milwaukee, WI 53202; 414/271-1768.

YOUTH RALLY

The Northern Wisconsin District Youth Rally is being hosted July 26-28 at Michigan Tech University in Houghton, Mich. For information contact Pastor Bruce McKenney, 3115 Meadow Ln., Manitowoc, WI 54220; 414/684-4327.

OWLS CONVENTION

The 1988 convention of the Organization of WELS Lutheran Seniors will be held July 12-14 at the Red Carpet Hotel, Milwaukee, Wis. An interesting program has been prepared including Bible study, workshops, displays, demonstrations, fellowship, entertainment and pre and post convention tours.

Anyone age 55 or whose spouse is 55 is encouraged to attend. For details on the program, lodging and meal arrangements and costs please contact: OWLS, 8420 W. Beloit Rd., West Allis, WI 53227; or call (on Thursday) 414/321-9977.

1988 OWLS HOSTEL

The 1988 OWLS Hostel will be offered July 15-20 at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis. This educational program offers a variety of courses and experiences. Meals and lodging are provided.

For specific information and registration materials contact: Special Ministries Board, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222; 414/771-9357

DISTRICT NEWS SCHEDULE

February 15: Arizona-California, Dakota-Montana, Michigan

March 1: Minnesota, Nebraska, North Atlantic

March 15: Northern Wisconsin, Pacific Northwest, South Atlantic

April 1: South Central, Southeastern Wisconsin, Western Wisconsin

If your district does not appear, it is because no news items were reported by your district reporter.

CHOIR ROBES

Available for cost of shipping: 25 gray choir robes. Contact The Lutheran Church of the Abiding Word, P.O. Box 294, Somers, WI 53171; 414/552-8186.

ESSAY AVAILABLE

The third edition of the essay, "Merchandising in the Churches" is now available in booklet or cassette form from the author, Pastor J. B. Erhart, 304 Crest Ave., Kirkwood, MO 63122.

CIVILIAN CHAPLAINS

Rev. Joel Jaeger Home Address Kastanien Strasse 4 6501 Klein Winternheim Federal Republic of Germany Phone 011-49-6136-8041	Rev. Lee Neujahr Home Address Hans - Sachs Str 18 8502 Zirndorf Federal Republic of Germany Phone 011-49-911-608824
Mailing Address Same as above	Mailing Address 98th General Hospital PO Box 391 APO NY 09105

Tourists in Europe: For time and place of services call the chaplains or WELS Special Ministries Board, 414/771-9357, USA.

ANNIVERSARIES

Lake City, Minnesota — St. John (100th), June 11-12. For information contact Centennial Committee, St. John Ev. Lutheran, 6th and Chestnut St., Lake City, MN 55041.

Falls Church, Virginia — Grace (25th), April, 1988. Anyone with pictures, memorabilia or other items of interest please send to Grace, 3233 Annandale Rd., Falls Church, VA 22042.

Marshall, Wisconsin — St. Paul (100th), January 24, February 28, April 24, August 28, September 25, November 6, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. September 25 dinner and 2:00 p.m. service. Contact Pastor David Plocher, 204 Deerfield Rd., Marshall, WI 53559; 608/655-3691.

NEW WELS CHURCHES

Names Requested

In recent months the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod began work in the states and cities listed below. Please send all names of members who moved into the general area of these cities, as well as names of people who may be interested in a Wisconsin Synod mission, to:

WELS MEMBERSHIP CONSERVATION
2929 N. Mayfair Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53222

Names as well as pertinent information regarding members referred will be forwarded to the nearest pastor and/or mission board chairman.

Arizona	.....	Gilbert*
		Prescott Valley*
California	.....	Bakersfield*
		Pleasanton
Colorado	.....	Colorado Springs (East)*
Florida	.....	Jupiter
		Miami (Hispanic)*
		Panama City*
Georgia	.....	Alpharetta
Illinois	.....	Buffalo Grove/Cherry Valley*
		Lindenhurst/Gurnee*
		Streamwood*
Indiana	.....	LaFayette*
Michigan	.....	Cadillac*
		Houghton/Hancock*
Minnesota	.....	Elk River
		Shoreview*
Nebraska	.....	Omaha (Southwest)
New Mexico	.....	Roswell*
New York	.....	Manhattan*
Ohio	.....	Toledo (Northwest)
Oklahoma	.....	Owasso*
Pennsylvania	.....	Bucks County*
South Dakota	.....	Custer*
Texas	.....	Abilene*
		Atascocita*
		Universal City
Virginia	.....	Loudon County*
Washington	.....	Everett*
		Spokane Valley*
		Woodinville/Bothell*
Wisconsin	.....	Green Bay (Southwest)*
		Madison (Hispanic)*
		Waunakee*
Ontario, Canada	.....	New Market*

*Denotes exploratory services.

NEW

Source of Faith God the Father Jesus Christ Holy Spirit God's Word Reverence Living Faith Grace and Mercy Faith Justification Forgiveness Hope Certainty Worshiping Faith Worship Remember Prayer The Church Faith

the Christian Faith

Obedience Freedom Conscience Watch Sanctification Serving Sexual Morality Service Stewardship Teaching Witness Work Patient Faith Humility Courage Suffering Strength The Fruit of Faith Patience Love Peace Kindness Self-Control Goodness Life and Death Triumphant Faith Faithfulness Joy Gentleness Heaven Hell Victory Amen The Source Fruit of Faith Reverence Forgiveness Hope Certainty Church Remember Stewardship William A. Kramer Witness Teaching Courage Triumphant Amen

Introducing the basics of Christianity

The Christian Faith

By William A. Kramer

A summary of what Christians believe and teach. Drawing his information from the source of the Christian faith, the Bible, the author touches on eight basic subjects — from the beginning of faith to its triumphant end. People outside Christianity will find this a useful introduction to the faith. Those inside will find here a refreshing review. This is an excellent gift for friends and relatives. 177 pages. Paper.

To place your order simply complete this order form and mail in your order. Please add 10% of the total dollar amount of the order (\$1.50 minimum — \$3.00 maximum) for handling and transportation costs. Wisconsin residents also add 5% state sales tax to total dollar amount including transportation and handling charges.

15N0455 Qty. _____
The Christian Faith \$7.95

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____



Visa
 MasterCard # _____

Exp. date _____

4-digit bank # _____ (if MasterCard)
 (number in lower left corner of card MUST be supplied)

NAME (print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____



1250 North 113th Street, P.O. Box 26975
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226-0975
 414/475-6600

VACATIONING?

When vacationing or fishing on the beautiful Kenai Peninsula, worship at Grace Lutheran, Kenai/Soldotna, Alaska (Ciechanski Rd. just off K-Beach Rd.) 11:00 a.m. Pastor Freddy Krieger, Box 1683, Kenai, AK 99611; 907/283-9551.

YELLOWSTONE VACATIONERS

If you are traveling in the area of Yellowstone Park, worship services are held the third Sunday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at the Powell Fairgrounds, Powell, WY. Pastor Ricky Himm, 711 W. 45th St., Casper, WY 82601; 307/235-2700 or 265-9357.

CHANGE OF TIME OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

in the following exploratory areas or mission congregations.

PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA — Panama City Lutheran, Wilson Funeral Home Chapel, 214 Airport Rd., Panama City. 9:00 a.m.: SS/Bible class, 10:30. Pastor Richard H. Warnecke, 2914 Jenks Ave., Panama City, FL 32405; 904/769-9616.

FAIRPORT, NEW YORK — Prince of Peace, Fairport Montessori School, 625 Ayrault Rd., Fairport. 9:30 a.m.: SS/Bible class, 11:00. Pastor Charles H. Heup, 72 Squire Dale Ln., Rochester, NY 14612; 716/227-6444.

YOU CAN BE PART OF THE PLAN!

CEF investments help Build His House



For information on CEF member loan investments and an application, contact your congregation's member loan representative or write Mr. Charles Skeels, WELS Director of Member Loans, 2929 N. Mayfair Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53222 (414) 771-6119 (collect calls accepted)
 You and our mission congregations will be glad you did.

SUBSCRIBER SERVICE

- NEW SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL
 For new subscription print name and address below. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of first copy. For subscription renewal include current mailing label to insure prompt and proper extension.
- GIFT SUBSCRIPTION
 Print name and address below of recipient and donor. We will send a gift card mentioning that this magazine subscription is from you. Name to be given on gift card:

Subscription Rates (payable in advance)
 1 year \$7.00 2 year \$13.00 3 year \$18.00
 Save by subscribing for 2 or 3 years.
 Please write for foreign rates.

- CHANGE OF ADDRESS
 Allow 4 weeks for change. Attach current mailing label and enter your new address below.
- QUESTION OR INQUIRY
 Include your mailing label when writing to us about your subscription.

Mail to: **THE NORTHWESTERN LUTHERAN, c/o Northwestern Publishing House, 1250 N. 113th St., P.O. Box 26975, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0975**
 Phone /414/ 475-6600

Make check or money order payable to Northwestern Publishing House.

Recipient of gift

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If mailing label is not available, print OLD address in this space.

Donor of gift

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ATTACH LABEL HERE

*Those
well-cast
phrases of
the general
prayer strike
a new note of
relevancy in
today's world.*

This is a lament over a prayer that is fast losing out.

One of the things I miss in our worship services these days is that old "general prayer" after the offering in the page 5 liturgy of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. Visiting a number of churches throughout the synod in the past several years, I have noticed that the prayer has fallen into disuse in favor of more "personal, intimate and spontaneous" prayers. Besides the problem of mechanical repetition, it would appear the prayer is too "generic."

Until a few days ago I did not realize that generic prayers were out and personal, spontaneous prayers were in. My awakening went something like this. I fielded a phone call from an anonymous caller complaining about one of our pastors. After inconclusive discussion at considerable length, the caller rang off with the exhortation that I pray for the pastor. I responded that I prayed every day for all our pastors. I was bluntly told to scrap "those generic prayers." Until that time I was not aware some kinds of prayers received more favorable attention before the throne of God. It was not the time to argue the point as the caller hung up.

The solemn accents of the general prayer, that "generic" prayer, were burned into me in my early years. "Graciously defend us from all calamities by fire and water; from war and pestilence; from scarcity and famine. . . . Be thou the God and Father of the widow and fatherless children . . . and the Comforter of the forsaken and distressed." It got so that I could recite the words along with the pastor as he read them.

There were Sundays, of course, when the words seemed to me to be spoken (or is "heard" better?) mechanically. But the message was clear to those who heard that at that moment a WELS community of God's people was praying for a suffering world, for a world in mortal distress. It was praying that went beyond their own self-interest and touched another world of pain and misery and hurts and needs to which as God's children they were debtors.

Those well-cast phrases of the general prayer strike a new note of relevancy in today's world. "Fire" — 12 died recently in a fire in Milwaukee's inner city, 10 of them children. As our great cities age, the central city is tinder. "War and pestilence" — when will the killing cease and what can stem the AID's calamity? "Scarcity and famine" — they leer at us on the evening news and mock us in the headlines. "Fatherless children" — it's an epidemic. "Forsaken and distressed" — their tears flood our country.

In Africa there is an old saying: when the elephants fight, it's the grass that gets trampled. And so it is. While the high and the mighty of the world feud, it's the little people who get crushed. And the high and the mighty survive in opulent and splendid retirement or exile.

Let's not forget a prayer for those who suffer, even if for the moment we must forget our own. Generic prayers are always in. Thus, it seems to me, saith the Lord.

James P. Schaefer

by Paul E. Kelm

I recently read literature which presented conflicting views of "when the moment of marriage takes place." What is the biblical answer to the question?

The Bible doesn't approach marriage from so philosophical a stance as "when does marriage begin." It establishes the essence of marriage as "mutual consent, sincerely and freely given" (in the words of the Lutheran marriage rite). God so instituted marriage in Genesis 2:24, as the willing "leaving" of a parental home and "cleaving" to a spouse with whom a new home is established (KJV terms).

Jewish custom provided that formal consent was mutually given in a "betrothal," followed somewhat later by cohabitation (cf. Deuteronomy 22:22-29 and Matthew 1:18-20). It would be hazardous to equate a contemporary engagement with that rite of betrothal or insist that Christians follow marital customs of first-century Judaism. The very words "engaged to be married" imply that the actual vows of consent are yet to come.

While the mutual consent that establishes a marriage may be a vow given privately, current law and mores together with Christian concern for offense suggest that we normally answer your question with: *the wedding.*

What does the Bible say about marriage between believers and unbelievers?

While God instituted marriage and inspired counsel and promises concerning marriage, the regulation of marriage falls within the domain of civil authority he ordained, rather than within the church's "Ministry of the Keys." The marriage of a Christian and non-Christian is valid. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 and 1 Peter 3:1-2 not only establish the validity of such mixed marriages but encourage the believing spouse to use the marital relationship as an opportunity for witness, with the hope of winning the non-Christian partner to saving faith.

The apostles, however, are addressing existing marriages (in which one partner likely became a Christian after marrying), not encouraging evangelism by matrimony. There is a wealth of biblical counsel against entering marriage with an unbeliever.

Within the unique combination of civil, social and spiritual rule that God established for Israel at Mt. Sinai, intermarriage with heathen neighbors was forbidden. "For they will turn your sons away from

following me to serve other gods," the Lord warned (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). After the captivity in Babylon, the rejection of mixed marriages became a specific test of faithfulness (Ezra 9:12, Nehemiah 13:25). While New Testament Christians are not under the "theocratic" laws of Sinai, the wisdom of God underlying his prohibition of mixed marriages in Israel should be apparent.

In fact, that wisdom of God is apparent well before and apart from the theocracy of Israel. Genesis 6 links mixed marriages with the moral and spiritual disintegration that brought the flood. The patriarchs were

**Where God
intended marriage
to be mutual support,
mixed marriage
fosters spiritual
conflict.**

insistent against any union of their children and idolatrous Canaanites (Genesis 24:3 and 28:1).

The reasons for which God-fearing parents oppose spiritually mixed marriages haven't changed. Where God intended marriage to be mutual support, mixed marriage fosters spiritual conflict. When trouble and strife threaten marital harmony, the couple that shares no common faith cannot find resolution in the will and promises of God. The spiritual training and even the eternal destiny of children are jeopardized when one parent is, at best, a tacit denial of Christianity.

For all these reasons and more, Christians who "seek first the kingdom of God" will want to practice pre-marital evangelism rather than hope for post-nuptial conversion. For all these reasons and more, Christians will want to offer special support to fellow believers whose marriages cannot provide that spiritual sustenance. □



Send your questions to Questions, The Northwestern Lutheran, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222. Questions of general interest are preferred. Questions will be answered, however, only through this column.

Pastor Paul Kelm is the synod's administrator for evangelism.